

Under the summer sun

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Summary: A little trip to the beach makes Saguru reconsider a few things about his friend.

Under the summer sun

\_We have this thing with Hebiaczek that we write little fic-fragments for each other... Well, today, she wanted to read a beach piece, and after I finished it, she said that I should consider uploading it. I tried to correct the mistakes that are kind of inevitable when you're writing directly in chat, but if there are any left, I'm sorry.\_

\_I still can't answer messages, I'm afraid, for personal reasons. I'm sorry.\_

\_Please enjoy.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Saguru is trying to find a calm spot in the chaos that's Oyashirazu beach at the moment. But he realizes soon enough that a calm spot might be just about impossible to find, so he corrects himself: a calmer spot. That's what he needs. Kaito is behind him, humming tunelessly, being the very definition of cheerful, carrying his bag and a parasol. Saguru insisted on having one, but it surprised him how easily Kaito went along with it.<p>

Finally, they settle down at a quieter part of the beach, setting down the parasol and a larger blanket, Saguru sitting down on it with a relieved sigh, already pulling his book out of his bag. A moment later, a large family with no less than eight children settle down right next to them, and his "calmer spot" is no more. Kaito doesn't look disturbed by them, in fact, he's watching the happily laughing children with a bright smile of his own, and he sure as hell doesn't look like he wants to look for another spot. Saguru just figures that his abilities of tuning noise out will be tested beyond measure on that day, but then Kaito turns to him, eyes wide and bright. He

doesn't have a look of challenge, not really, but rather the look of a puppy waiting for his owner. Saguru doesn't know what he did to get in that position, and it makes him uncomfortable.

Kaito doesn't notice his uneasiness, or if he does, he doesn't comment on it, just keeps watching him with those eyes, before he asks, his tone just as eager as he looks: "Do you know how to play volleyball?" So much for peacefully reading Sherlock Holmes on the beach. Saguru nods clumsily, then slips his book back in his bag, and stands up. As an afterthought, he covers their bags with a towel, though he knows it does little to prevent anyone from stealing them. It's more of a habit really, a little normalcy in the mayhem he's already getting ready for. He's with Kaito, so pretty much anything can happen.

As they are walking down the beach, towards a group of young boys around their age playing volleyball, Saguru reflects on how he got there, uneasiness growing even more in his stomach.

Now there's only two of them, but it wasn't meant to be that way. It was Aoko who organized it all, Kaito cheerfully and Saguru somewhat reluctantly going along with it. He has no doubt that it was the girl's attempt to bring them closer, though their dismay towards each other with Kaito is long gone, as it turned into something like a tame friendship.

And then, right in the morning, Aoko called him that she got sick and that she must stay at home but she insists that the two of them go out and have fun regardless. She said this with a few clumsily imitated coughs and a tone that sounds way too healthy - her acting is terrible, but he isn't expecting anything better from an earnest and open girl like her.

Warnings go off in his head though, and they refuse to quiet down, especially when he sees how easily Kaito accepts it. He knows Aoko better, a lot better, and yet he acts like there's nothing weird about the situation at all. He just ushers Saguru towards the train station with a kind of easy-going air, saying that they should listen to Aoko and go out anyway.

Saguru knows that there's a trap, that he's walking right into it, and his insides are already screaming at him in fear of becoming the victim of Kaito's pranking yet again - he doesn't want to be buried in sand shoulder deep, left at the mercy of waddling children and half blind elders. Or whatever cruelty Kaito is planning against him.

But Kaito, despite the easy-going air around him, is awfully convincing, and keeps him going even when he just wants to dig his heels in the ground not move an inch. Before he knows it, they are already on the train, Kaito sitting across him, looking outside with a somewhat bored expression that lights up whenever he glances at him when he thinks that Saguru isn't looking.

Whatever Kaito's planning, he hates it already.

When they get off the train, Saguru takes a relieved breath, freed from the tense atmosphere that was barely masked by Kaito's seemingly indifferent act (whether because he didn't want to hide it or because he couldn't, Saguru doesn't know, and it's driving him insane), and

glad that he wasn't humiliated on the train by the endless stream of pranks. But again, Kaito keeps him going, with the same air he had when going to the train station, just a touch more chipper.

That cheerful act fully blooms by the time they reach the beach, his grin wide and as genuine as Kaito gets.

Saguru is pulled back to reality suddenly as Kaito tugs on his arm, and he notices how warm Kaito's palm is on his skin. He's not sure what to do with that information.

They join some random boys and start playing in opposing teams.

As Saguru is watching Kaito through the web, occasionally hitting the ball back on the other side but otherwise letting the "ace" of his team lead them, he can see once again how well the other moves. Kaito is no professional with volleyball, but it only shows rarely when he's handling the ball, because other than that, his instincts are sharp, his movements quick but still somehow elegant. It's no surprise, really, given that Saguru knows, knows well who Kaito is, but he still gives himself a split second to watch in awe before he gets back in the game.

Their match ends with Kaito's team winning, easier than Saguru would like to admit, though he knows that it wasn't all up to the two of them, as there were three more boys on both sides. It's amazing how he can turn everything into a competition between the two of them, he thinks with a self-deprecating smile.

He doesn't have much more time to think, though, because Kaito is by his side in a moment, tugging him towards an ice cream stand. He's saying something too, but Saguru can't make all of it out beneath the buzzing in his ears as once again the warm feeling from Kaito's palms registers in his head. He loves that sensation for a reason he can't understand yet. It's worse that he's scared to understand it, to get what lies behind that liking.

Kaito only lets him go when he's getting his ice cream, as if he was scared that he would lose Saguru otherwise, but even then, he seems to keep an eye on him. He finds it unnerving, and he can't find a meaning for this act - Kid might have a reason to watch him closely, but Kuroba Kaito never treated him with more than some begrudging friendliness that softened only a little lately. Maybe Kaito thinks that Saguru will flee the moment he's not paying attention, he thinks, but then Kaito starts eating his ice cream and he has his distraction already. A distraction a part of him curses while the other welcomes, because gods, no one should eat ice cream so, so... obscenely, but at the same time, it's somewhat arousing. As soon as that thought enters his mind, Saguru wants to slap himself.

And in the midst of his inner turmoil, Kaito is watching him with this odd look that either means that he has no idea what's going on or he knows perfectly what Saguru is thinking. He believed that he's gotten pretty good at reading Kaito, arrogantly enough, and now that arrogance is back to whack him on the head, because now, in that moment, he has no idea what the other is up to.

It's maddening.

In the end, Kaito drags him back to where they left their bags,

bouncing rather than walking. Again, he says something, something that Saguru can't understand, and for all he knows, he could be talking in Swahili rather than Japanese, because it would be all the same to Saguru. Luckily, Kaito doesn't seem to need his input for the conversation, he keeps it going on his own just fine.

Once they get there, he mercifully lets Saguru settle down on the blanket in the shade of their parasol, himself scouting the beach with his eyes, finishing the last bits of his ice cream. And then he starts licking his fingers, god. He facepalms with a barely audible groan, which earns him a surprised look from Kaito.

It's as if he's not aware what he's doing, though Saguru is not stupid enough to fall for that - if there's one person on the bloody planet who knows what they're doing, at all times, it's Kaito. It's a scary thought, but his crazily pounding heart distracts him from the dread he should be feeling.

And then Kaito looks at him, eyes once again bright and eager, and asks: "Do you want to swim?"

Well, Saguru recognizes that it's a question, but Kaito's tone tells him that he doesn't have another option. He will be dragged along, even if Kaito has to haul him all across the sandy beach. So he decides to save face as much as he can, and nods. That seems to be enough for Kaito, who's already shedding his shirt and shorts. Then he takes a sky blue inflatable ball from his bag, somehow filling it with air in a matter of seconds (some sort of trick probably, Saguru thinks), and bounces off towards the water.

He's not tugging on Saguru's arm this time, but the boy sees Kaito's empty hands flex absently. A nervous habit, he would think, if Kaito had any reason to be nervous, but since he doesn't, the meaning behind that gesture is once again unknown and worrying.

Once they get to the water, Kaito looks effortlessly cheerful again, trying to keep the ball in the air as long as he can. Saguru just stands there, feeling and probably looking awkward, when Kaito with a sudden movement sends the ball his way, and it almost hits him in the face before he clumsily hits it back. Kaito's laughter seems to ring in his ears as he moves in to catch the ball and send it towards him again.

They fool around like that for a while, Saguru getting increasingly better with passing the ball back while Kaito's laughter gets louder and happier. There's something genuine about it, as they shout meaningless taunts and challenges to each other, and different dares to the loser who drops the ball first - and surprise: it's not Kaito who loses.

Saguru's punishment is light to the point of being almost non-existent, he just has to build a sand castle. It wouldn't be a punishment at all, if not for Kaito's surprising maximalism with building the best sand castle ever. A toddler ruins the first tower Saguru builds, and somehow it's Saguru's fault. He doesn't even want to know why or how, just accepts it with a sigh. Maybe it's a little sad how easily he can kiss his pride goodbye.

When the castle is finished, though, Kaito is looking at it with a proud smile, and he slings an arm over Saguru's shoulder. The weather

is getting colder as the Sun sinks lower on the sky, but Kaito is still warm against him, and he feels it even more now that the cool breeze is there to provide contrast.

Saguru leans into the touch just a little, and Kaito turns to watch him with that look in his eyes again - he either has no idea or knows everything. There's a tense silence between them, the noises from the beach surrounding them fading into nothing. Kaito leans just a tiny bit closer... but just to blow in his ear then hits him with a water bomb that he produced out of nowhere.

It's war from then on. The shark grin on Kaito's face should worry Saguru, but all he thinks about is payback, in any way possible once he catches that menace that is Kaito, and it doesn't even register how much fun he's having until they are already laying on the sand, exhausted and panting, giggling like idiots, and feeling genuinely happy. They start all over after a few minutes of rest, and then they collapse on the sand again, tired after making such a spectacle out of themselves. Saguru, for once, doesn't feel ashamed or self-conscious, just... content. Kaito looks content too, smiling dazedly at the darkening blue sky. His chest rises up and falls down rapidly with short pants. Saguru, for reasons he would understand only much, much later, thinks that this, this moment is just perfect.

Later, on the train with Kaito eventually dozing off on his shoulder, he has time to reflect, though he can't come to a proper conclusion. To decide what was summer heat, what was teenage hormones, and what was genuine interest... that's a difficult task. He needs to try anyway, for himself, and for Kaito too. And when Kaito says goodbye to him at the train station, still looking dazed and, though he wants to hit himself on the head for the thought, adorable, Saguru finds all the motivation he needs to keep trying.

End  
file.